

State Representative **Dave Quall**

40th District

Mount Vernon Office

360-428-1023

Olympia Office

301 John L. O'Brien Building

PO Box 40600

Olympia, WA 98504-0600

360-786-7800

E-mail

Quall.Dave@leg.wa.gov

Committees

Education (Chair)

Appropriations Subcommittee
on Education

2007 Session Report to the 40th District

Opening new doors for high school students in Skagit County

High school students in Skagit County will soon be able to enrich their learning through unique vocational and technical classes offered by a new regional skills center.

We approved \$24.4 million for construction of a new Skagit County Skills Center, a project that has been several years in the making and spearheaded by the seven Skagit County school district superintendents. The funding will fully pay for the design and construction of the skills center at the main campus of Skagit Valley College and a satellite campus for a Marine Technology Center.

In addition, lawmakers in Olympia passed SB 5790 which will support the operations of skills centers across the state. Skills centers have proven to be a popular and successful resource for high school students. I've heard from numerous students during committee hearings who say their experiences at skills centers have changed their lives. For many students at risk of dropping out, the opportunity to learn a hands-on trade or skill keeps them engaged in school and gets them back on track to graduate.

The Skagit County Skills Center will be the eleventh in the state. Our goal is to eventually open as many as 20 state-wide. The centers offer a range of courses that not only benefit students, but also help local economies by providing training in growing local industries.

Proposed skills centers must first go through a feasibility study that identifies what kinds of industries would benefit from a local skills center. Automobile technology, marine technology, computer-aided design, nursing and dental assistant are some of the courses that are proposed for the new Skagit County Skills Center. I'm particularly excited about the marine technology program. Skagit County stands to become a national leader in boat-building if we can provide the workforce power.

Representative Dave Quall

2007 Session Report to the 40th District

Local students serve a week in Olympia - thank you!

Every year, dozens of high school students spend a week in Olympia serving as pages. Pages help with everything from ceremonial tasks such as presenting the flags to operational tasks such as distributing copies of bills to lawmakers during floor session.

It was a pleasure hosting the wonderful students below. Their work helped make this session a success.



Luis Alaniz



Tabitha English

Session Scorecard for Education

Since my first session in 1993, and even since I started chairing the House Education Committee in 1999, I can't remember a time that education was as front and center in both the Legislature and the public as it was this year.

As chair of the House Education Committee, there are several proposals I focused on to help our kids succeed in math, close the achievement gap, and give every one of our boys and girls a chance to start their education off on the right foot.

Helping all children succeed and graduate on time

Washington ranks 27th in the nation for percentage of students who graduate on time. In some districts, drop-out rates are as high as 45 percent. This must change. We passed HB 1573 to create a new grant program known as the Building Bridges Program. The grants will fund innovative partnerships among schools and communities committed to helping students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of not graduating.

Keeping our schools safe

The recent murder-suicide at the University of Washington and the tragedy at Virginia Tech University are sobering reminders of the importance of ensuring our campuses are safe places for our students and faculty. SB 5097 will ramp up school safety by requiring schools to adopt and implement a safe school plan.

The bill includes many provisions including one to give first responders the information they need to quickly respond to threats. This can be done by regular updating and use of "school mapping" data being collected in all districts. The data allows first responders to pull up a range of detailed information on a school including escape routes, shut-off valves and points of entry.

Turning the great outdoors into a great place to learn

Beginning with the graduating class of 2013, students must pass the science portion of the WASL to graduate from high school. Unfortunately, science can be incredibly abstract to many children and we know thousands of students will struggle to meet the high standards without some kind of special instruction.

HB 1677 will provide students a hands-on learning opportunity to learn about science in a whole new way. The new Outdoor Education and Recreation Program will provide grants to school districts to help low-income students and those in danger of dropping out get outside and learn about conservation, natural resources and the environment.

WASL: The challenge and the goal

More than 40 percent of high school students are struggling to pass the math portion of the WASL.

In addition, thousands of English-learning students and low-income students are disproportionately failing the reading and writing portions of the test. These results point to unacceptable inequities in our system and a failure to adequately prepare all students for success.

Our challenge, and our goal, is to give our schools the time and resources needed to help every student meet the standard.

That's why lawmakers approved a proposal to postpone the math and science graduation requirement for the WASL until the class of 2013. This will ensure we aren't holding our children to a standard that our system can't deliver, and give us time to improve the system and boost student performance. We also made it possible for students to demonstrate achievement and proficiency in other ways such as AP classes or SAT scores.

The bottom line is that we want every child to succeed and learn at higher levels. The WASL has successfully shown us where we're doing a good job of that and where we aren't. As chair of the House Education Committee, I will continue to push for reforms that make sure we're putting the right resources into the system to help every child make the grade.

Other successes for our region

- **New judge for San Juan** Currently, San Juan County and Island County share the cost for one court district and two Superior Court judges. But with growing caseloads, the time has come for each county to have its own district. SB 5247 creates two separate districts and assigns the two current judges to Island County while creating a new judge position for San Juan County. This new position will become effective only if both counties approve the additional position and provide funding.
- **Protecting local lands** Lawmakers approved funding for two important local natural resource projects. The funding will support protection of Blanchard Mountain's oldest forests, lakes, caves and trails, and conservation of 400 acres of Lopez Island's most important watersheds, Lopez Hill. Lopez Hill is one of the largest undeveloped parcels remaining on Lopez Island.

Legislative Walk Challenge

Mount Vernon's Madison Elementary will receive \$3,500 from Regence Blue Shield thanks to the Legislative Walk Challenge. During the weeks of February 12 to March 23, lawmakers wore pedometers to track how many steps they took and submitted a weekly report. I took the top prize in the challenge by walking 338 miles, but the boys and girls at Madison will benefit the most.



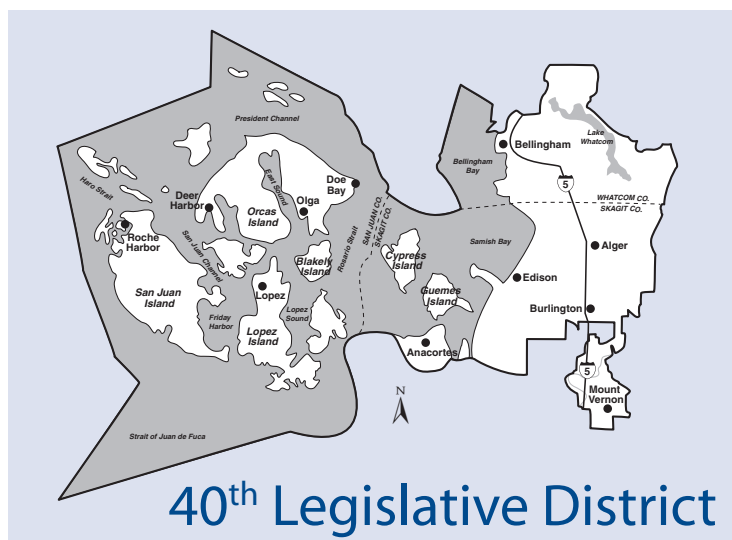
- **Flood control** The City of Mount Vernon will receive \$1 million for their Downtown and Waterfront Flood Control Project. This project is critical to protecting the city's downtown core during flooding.
- **Medical care in rural communities** Smaller hospitals such as those in the Skagit Valley currently are not able to provide preventative, non-emergency cardiac procedures, such as angioplasties, to clear partially clogged arteries. This means patients from rural areas wanting such services have to travel to major hospitals.

Thanks to passage of HB 2304, Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon and other smaller hospitals around the state, could be able to provide such services as soon as 2009. This is an important step to improving access to medical care in rural communities.

- **New Skagit Recreation and Event Center** Currently, there is no indoor recreation facility in Skagit County. But soon that will change and local families will have a fun new place to play and learn. Lawmakers approved funding to begin design on a new indoor facility to house sporting events, recreation classes, and eventually an aquatic center. The facility will be located along College Way in Mount Vernon.
- **Western Washington University** Higher education plays a very important role in our communities, and I'm pleased to report the Legislature supported the work of WWU. Over \$47 million in construction funding for the university will renovate and build new classrooms. The budget included the Biomedical Research Activities In Neuroscience (BRAIN) Program to link biology and chemistry curriculum and prepare students for biomedical research positions in academia and industry. WWU's funding also covered Bellingham waterfront planning for the university, more enrollments, and the advanced materials science and engineering center.



WWU is poised to expand opportunities for students in research and science.



40th Legislative District